

NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Advanced Education

\$50M FOR GENOME BC WILL HELP UNRAVEL LIFE'S MYSTERIES

VICTORIA – The Province has committed \$50 million to the continued success of Genome British Columbia in spearheading a wide variety of world-class DNA research projects essential to the people, industries and environment of B.C., Advanced Education Murray Coell announced today.

“We’re investing in the future of our province through Genome BC’s vital research in the areas of health, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, mining, bio-energy and the environment, including climate change,” said Coell, who is also Minister responsible for Research and Technology.

“Scientists are working right now on projects aimed at producing new sources of biofuels, developing disease-resistant bees, helping reduce the use of chemical pesticides, tailoring medications to individual patients and improving the success of organ transplants. Their work will continue to enhance B.C.’s reputation as a global magnet for life sciences research, while improving the outlook for patients, and fostering the growth of industries here and around the world.”

Genome BC also brings together international experts from universities, research hospitals, government and industry from around the world to collaborate on projects that are strategically important to the Province. The organization funds and co-ordinates research that responds to a wide variety of challenges, such as the mountain pine beetle infestation of B.C. forests and emerging infectious diseases.

This additional \$50 million brings B.C.’s contribution to Genome BC to \$152.5 million since 2001. It will be invested in the non-profit organization’s 2010-2015 business plan, preparing Genome BC to compete for national and international funding, recruit world-class researchers, and undertake more long-term projects.

“Our five-year plan starting in 2010 focuses on helping B.C. meet the challenges of a changing world, including climate change, as well as further developing research programs that position this province as a world leader,” said Alan Winter, president and CEO of Genome BC. “We fully expect this new provincial funding to attract triple that amount from outside sources.”

Provincial funding has been instrumental in Genome BC’s being awarded more than a quarter of the funding available from federal competitions through Genome Canada, for a geographic area with just over an eighth of Canada’s population. Genome BC is expected to have total research investments of \$370 million or more by 2010.

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Estimated spinoff benefits from Genome BC to date are 8,400 person-years of employment, \$450 million added to the province's gross domestic product, and provincial and federal tax revenues of \$108 million.

Since June 2001, the Province has committed over \$1.5 billion to research in B.C., and leveraged more than \$900 million in added research funding from other sources.

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